11: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

[1894-1910]

434 The total income of the tribe had risen to $29,000.[284] Of this amount,
311 one-half was derived from farm products including hay. The two were, in fact, almost synonymous, for only 51½ acres were still being cultivated.[285] The erratic subsistence farming was rapidly abandoned and the whole
[463] tribe turned to providing fodder for the new herds: "Almost the only occupations beside looking after the cattle and horses are hay making and freighting coal."[286]

246 Many factors encouraged the Blood to join in the haying experiment.
657 First, a market existed both on and off the reservation: what the Indian
[434] herds did not need was sold to the Mounted Police or neighboring white ranchers. Second, there was no onerous cultivation. Except for a few irrigated acres, the hay that was cropped grew wild on the prairies. And finally, in a new setting, the haying camps recalled the great days of their hunting
[464] past. In the late summer, the tribe again made for the open range. Any man who owned a wagon, a team of horses, and a few implements, could be sure of some income from the new industry. Those who lacked even these few basic necessities could attach themselves to wealthier men. As in the earlier time, their labor would be rewarded by some small share in the harvest.
[556] Advantage still remained with the men of wealth, but participation was
[184] assured at a low level, and even the poor man had a chance.

[571] The camps also strengthened, if only temporarily, bonds of family and
[621] band. The notorious Charcoal,[287] who had left his home in anger and moved
[593] far off by himself, joined the haying camp, again accepted the leadership of his brother and helped bring in the crop. Desire to share in the new wealth
[182] overcame violent intra-familial resentment.

In 1902, one-third of the adult males on the reserve owned cattle.[288]
464 By 1909, practically every man could boast a cow. Numerous circumstances
[231] contributed to the more equitable distribution of wealth during the first
[434] decade of the century. Such industries as haying, hauling, or working in the beet factory were open to everyone. In 1905, beet fields were planted at Raymond,[289] and two years later the Blood earned $9000 topping beets and
[316] carting them to the factory.[290] And the report continues, "One of our
[472] Indians named Black Horse has a small coal mine on the banks of the St. Mary's River from which he makes his living mining and selling coal to the

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[284] *Ibid.*, Pt. 2, p. 228.

[285] *Ibid.*, Pt. 2, p. 220.

[286] *Ibid.*, Pt. 1, p. 132.

[287] Charcoal later murdered his wife's lover. He killed himself as he was about to be apprehended by the Agency police assisted by his own brothers.

[288] 1904, Vol. 11, No. 27, p. 237.

[289] 1905, Vol. 11, No. 27, p. 203.

[290] 1907-1908, Vol. 14, No. 27, p. 161.

11: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood

[1894–1910]

schools and settlers in the neighborhood."[111] His lucrative venture added to the general income: anyone so minded could haul coal at a fixed rate.

But the chief concern of the Blood was with their herds. In 1902, a loan system had been established.[112] "The system," explains a report, "is the lending to the Indians of one or two animals upon condition that, at the expiration of a certain time he will return to the department an equal number,—these in turn being loaned to others." Any increase above that number was his. And in 1905, the Blood demanded the 900 head of cattle still due under the old treaty of 1877. Having once refused them, "these men seeing the advance made by cattle herders . . . changed their minds."[113]

By 1906, the Blood had more than 7500 cattle,[114] and a cash income of

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[111] *Ibid.* Among the Northern Blackfoot the mines are tribally owned and the benefits general. In fact, in contradistinction to the Blood, much of the experience of this tribe in the reserve period has tended to equalize wealth. Among other things, the cold winters of 1905–6 and 1906–7 affected the Northern Blackfoot much more seriously than they did the Blood and more of their cattle were lost. This no doubt inspired a more general North Blackfoot participation in agriculture both before 1910 and after. The cold winters of 1919 and 1920, therefore, did not create as inequitable a situation for them as they did for the Blood.

But perhaps even more fundamental to the general security of the North Blackfoot was their income from annuities and land rentals that became substantial something over twenty years ago. These neatly cushioned the shock from any drop in market price. In 1923, they reached a combined total of more than $88,000 (for the Blood approximately $22,000); in 1934, during the great depression and drought, the North Blackfoot had an income of almost $125,000 from these same sources (the Blood something over $13,000). The last published figures (for 1936) vary little from these. A census taken in 1939 reveals a North Blackfoot population of 830; a Blood population of 1476.

According to Dr. Jane Richardson and Dr. Lucien M. Hanks, Jr. (personal communications) everyone on the North Blackfoot Reserve under fifty years of age receives $25 annually, over fifty years, $50. Besides liberal grocery rations, 7 lbs. of meat are allotted weekly to each individual. The sick and aged receive additional help. At marriage a young couple is set up in a newly built or adequately refurbished house, given furniture, a horse and wagon if desired, and what is more important, forty acres of the best cultivatable land still available. An informant told Dr. Richardson, "There are no more poor on this reserve." Another, somewhat nostalgic for the privileges of the past, said, "It isn't fun being a *sinipoka* on this reserve any more." While there is still considerable wife-beating and a rare case of wife-murder, Dr. Richardson says there is little violence exhibited between males. Evidently, the practical elimination of wealth differences has effectively reduced the strains of competition, and as a corollary, the incidence of assault among them.

[112] 1902, Vol. 11, No. 27, p. 132.

[113] 1905, Vol. 11, No. 27, p. 202.

[114] 1907–1908, Vol. 14, No. 27, p. 162. This peak was not maintained. The cold winter that followed reduced the herds almost one-third (among the Piegan and the North Blackfoot the loss was even higher). Fifty-five hundred cattle survived and no great dislocation of ownership seems to have resulted.

Browning Earners

121 Before I take up the Browning family cycle I wish to analyze briefly the earners in the Browning sample. Who earns, the sex, racial ancestry, age and duration of employment will all be discussed.

128 464 Of the 212 persons in my sample, 35 are earners. These persons reside in 25 of the 39 households (64 per cent); fourteen households (36 per cent) have no in-residence earners of any sort. Ten households have more than one earner (usually husband and wife). Twenty-two 434 earners are males, thirteen are females. Total earned income is $126,000, 128 with seven households having joint husband-wife earners receiving about 50 per cent of the total. [464] As mentioned, one-half of all earned income is derived from federal employment (Community Action Program, other OEO [472] agencies, BIA, Forest Service, National Park Service, etc.). Two households are engaged in individually-owned private businesses which bring in $18,800 (about fourteen per cent of all earned income for the entire sample) and one couple earns about $3,000 per annum doing Indian 434 crafts. Other sources of employment are individual ranching (one case), 464 Tribal Policeman (one), school teaching (one), ranching and farming, 128 housekeeping, waitressing, etc., for others. The high percentage of earned revenue from federal jobs suggests meager success and opportunities in private enterprises.

434 There are twenty-one full-time earners; these reside in sixteen 592 households. Five households have two steady earners each. Thus only 13 of 128 39 households have steady earners, or only 43 per cent of all households 464 sampled. The median age of steady earners is 42.0 years, which is almost 128

13: Robbins E-4,5 (1967-1970) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

suffered by the full bloods.

Along with observations about demography I pointed out and analyzed a relative rise in the incidence of matrifocal and patrifocal households from 1921 to 1966 and that more and more of these result from marital separations. If these forms are part of a disorganization syndrome, as sociological studies imply, then they are another indication of worsening conditions.

The 1921 farming program largely failed, as was shown, principally because of poor capitalization. No farm was comparable in size to the 1920 average size of Mountain States farms. Most of the rural farmers could not compete with the increasing number of high-investment agricultural enterprises and declining prices after World War I.

The final chapter deals with a modest Browning sample of 39 households. Although the Browning family cycle is very similar to the rural family cycle, far fewer Browning households are multiple-family in composition. Available housing, the ease with which families can give and receive aid in a concentrated population likely curtail the incidence of multiple-family households. But cooperating kin units, forming small neighborhoods, are common and function much like the multiple-family households and land clusters in rural districts.

Median Browning household and family income are only slightly above the rural figures; per capita income is only about $150 more per year. Those in Browning who earn reasonable incomes are few in number in my small sample. Seven households, all of which are independent, receive almost half the total income for the entire sample and in these

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

same bundle would have been considered a valuable asset in the competition for exhibition of generosity, to say nothing of its supernatural benefits, and the possessor would have been aided by the pooled resources of his large circle of kinfolk.

Yet there remain significant differences between white and Indian consumers. Of low status in terms of skills which they can contribute, their returns are less and their share proportionately smaller. Few Indians have been able to alter their lot through education, even if they normally could expect employment of their skills off the reserve. In capital assets, they are paupers, for property of value in the white economy is usually theirs only for use and not for disposal. As participants in the white world they would be living without opportunity for social advance on the bottom rung, with inadequate diet, the cheapest of clothing, and the most dismal of houses to rent.

This impoverishment not only occurred through dependence on the white economy, but dependence redefined wealth itself. Starting from a period when wealth was viewed in terms of horses transferable between all Indians, it became increasingly necessary to deal with whites. In these dealings the Indian pony quickly lost its value. Later barter took place, but gradually transactions were restricted to a currency basis. Now only the agency converts certain defined commodities into cash. With conversion rates determined by the agent and the world market, Indian labour and produce achieve value for the white economy. In some respects the rate of conversion is the same for Indian and white, yet in others, e.g. wages, seeking to accomplish the most with limited operating funds, the agency has set conversion at a lower rate than the one found off the reserve.

While the trust funds help mitigate some of the discrepancies between the two worlds, the Blackfoot are still far from possessing certain key advantages of the white citizen. On the reserve there is little freedom or encouragement of enterprise. Skills of value in the white economy are fostered to a point, but their development as an enterprise is minimal. The possibility of loans from the trust fund has not been realized, probably because individuals have not enough private property to offer as security to make the loan acceptable to Ottawa. Certainly banks and credit houses are excluded since the property of these wards is inalienable. Moreover, the emphasis given by the agency and the council of chiefs has been on collective advancement rather than on using the trust funds to

16: Hanks & Hanks E,P-4,5 (1938-1941) 1950
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Northern Blackfoot
Blackfoot Reserve

capitalize individual enterprise. Thus, except for the part-time vendor and the seasonal services performed in the mining village, intra-reserve enterprise has remained undeveloped. This stands in considerable contrast with many reservations in the United States where stores, garages, and filling stations are owned and operated by Indians.

Whether or not the encouragement of enterprise for a fee is desirable for the Blackfoot reserve is debatable. From the point of view of the writers, the critical point is that the Indians lie midway in social structure between two types of economy. The one is the indigenous system where goods and services flow on a basis of reciprocal obligations between members of a common group of kinsmen. Though the prestige-gaining treasures of the system required a fee, as on entering an age-graded society, subsistence was based on reciprocal obligations. The poor were either not poor in this basic sense or were isolated individuals without kinsmen. The other economy, the white system, places even subsistence on a fee basis and dissolves the community of obligations within most groups beyond the family. On the reserve services for a fee have entered; dealings with whites are necessarily on such a basis, and between Indians this pattern is also found occasionally, e.g., taxi service to the coal-mine. However, the mechanisms of distribution within the reserve and the relation of Indian employer to employee are still based on reciprocal obligations.

Indeed, until now the Blackfoot seem to have resisted the market economy. Indians have persistently argued that the agency should assume the obligation of providing basic economic security. They have been unwilling ever since signing the treaty to adopt the white view of satisfying the basic needs for warmth and sustenance on a fee basis. This was a compelling reason for settling on the reserve and later for selling a portion of it. The agent, instead of being a manager of their affairs is considered the dispenser of necessities, which have changed through the years.[1]

Individualism they have, in the tradition of other Plains Indians. A Blackfoot might take whatever sacred bundles appealed to him or, if he wished, invent a new bundle. He might go to war alone or, in company with a war party, endanger for his own interests the safety of the group, without serious repercussions. In camp he was the law that protected his interests. Many of the same individualistic

[1]As this relates to chiefs and the extended family, cf. p. 130, p. 161.

easy to barter Indian ponies for cattle. Consequently, Blackfoot cattle tended to end up in the hands of a few aggressive entrepreneurs. As early as 1902, only 47 Blackfeet had substantial cattle herds. The Office of Indian Affairs was aware of the monopolizing process on the reservation and acted to reverse the trend (NA, 1903).

The cattle question on the Blackfoot Reservation placed the government in a dilemma. The government tried to foster both the tribe's collective economic advancement and self-enterprise among individual members. The more ambitious, however, by their very aggressiveness, tended to defeat the government's effort to raise the general level of economic self-sufficiency. In a sense, the government was too successful in introducing capitalism to the Blackfeet, and it never solved the problem of reconciling an economic system based on creating winners and losers with a commitment to preventing losses. The reality that not every Blackfoot tribal member could be a successful entrepreneur did not mesh with government programs. Furthermore, intervention ensured discontent from every faction on the reservation.

The problem was further compounded by increasing pressure on the Office of Indian Affairs to establish grazing leases for outside cattlemen. Nearby ranchers had already found they could make individual arrangements with Blackfoot tribal members and bring their cattle onto the reservation. A grazing lease system was required to bring the problem of trespass cattle under control. Until the Blackfeet enlarged their cattle herds sufficiently to use the entire reservation, leasing to outside cattlemen appeared a reasonable method to increase Blackfoot income. At the same time the government was reluctant to tie up large amounts of reservation land in leases that might soon be allotted. Consequently, the government instituted a "permit system" on the reservation rather than a lease system. The permit system had the added advantage from the agent's point of view of not requiring approval from the tribal council.

Although the permit system had been instituted while Hamilton was away from the reser